



**McGregor W. Scott**  
United States Attorney  
Eastern District of California

*Sacramento*  
501 I. Street, Ste 10-100  
Sacramento CA 95814  
Tel (916) 554-2700  
TTY (916) 554-2855

**NEWS RELEASE**

*Fresno*  
2500 Tulare St., Suite 4401  
Fresno, CA 93721  
Tel (559) 497-4000  
TTY (559) 497-4500

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
**August 17, 2007**

Contact: Rosemary Shaul (916) 554-2802  
<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/cae>

**FOREX TRADING "GURU" PLEADS GUILTY TO SCAMMING**  
**MILLIONS FROM INVESTORS**

SACRAMENTO – United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced that JOEL NATHAN WARD, 48, of Turlock, California, pleaded guilty before United States District Judge Garland E. Burrell, Jr. to five counts of wire fraud, two counts of mail fraud, and two counts of engaging in monetary transactions in property derived from specified unlawful activity, a form of money laundering. There is no plea agreement in the case, and WARD pleaded guilty to all charges in the indictment. Judge Burrell ordered WARD to submit to electronic monitoring pending sentencing. Sentencing is scheduled for November 2, 2007, at 9:00 a.m.

This case is the product of an extensive, joint investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation.

The Commodity Futures Trading Commission, the federal agency that regulates commodity futures and options markets in the United States, has noted the sharp rise and increasing complexity of foreign currency exchange ("forex") trading scams. WARD, a frequent commentator and seminar speaker on forex trading, ran an elaborate forex trading scam through two of his companies, the Joel Nathan Forex Investment Group of Turlock and Learn: Forex, Inc., a forex trading educational center based in Sacramento.

According to Assistant United States Attorneys Benjamin B. Wagner and Ellen V. Endrizzi, who are prosecuting the case, the indictment alleged that as part of the scheme, WARD offered investors the opportunity to invest in the foreign exchange interbank “spot” market through his fund, the Joel Nathan ForexFund. Many of WARD’s victims were family members, close friends, and individuals who had been enrolled in the Learn: Forex program, either in Sacramento or through online classes. WARD required a minimum \$50,000 investment, and told investors they could anticipate significant returns. The indictment also charged WARD with defrauding investors in a second scheme relating to a purported real estate investment project in Mississippi. WARD was alleged to have simply diverted investors' funds to his own use.

In pleading guilty today, WARD admitted that he stole the investors’ funds, using the money for his own compensation and expenses, and to purchase the Learn: Forex School in Sacramento. He also admitted that, in order to conceal the theft, he made “Ponzi” payments using other investors’ funds and provided his investors with altered account statements. WARD’s investment fraud scheme collapsed in November 2006. The investor victims lost over \$7 million.

United States Attorney Scott said, "Investors should be wary of persons who promise high returns through the use of unusual investment programs. WARD used his self-proclaimed expertise in foreign currency trading to steal millions of dollars from family, friends, employees, and other investors. While he claimed to be a highly successful trader, in fact he was merely a thief. "

The maximum penalty under federal law for each offense of wire fraud and mail fraud is 20 years’ imprisonment, a three-year term of supervised release, and a \$250,000 fine. The maximum penalty for each offense of money laundering is ten years’ imprisonment, a three-year term of supervised release, and a \$250,000 fine. However, the actual sentence will be determined at the discretion of the Court after consideration of the advisory Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables, and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

###